

**National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, DC 20594**

**Brief of Accident**

**Adopted 09/20/2002**

DEN02LA036 File No. 12295	04/04/2002	Leadville, CO	Aircraft Reg No. N997GM	Time (Local): 14:00 MST		
Make/Model:	Bell / 206B-III			Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Engine Make/Model:	Rolls Royce/Allison / 250-C20B		Crew	0	0	1
Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed		Pass	0	0	1
Number of Engines:	1					
Operating Certificate(s):	On-demand Air Taxi; Aircraft External Load					
Type of Flight Operation:	Aerial Observation					
Reg. Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation					
Last Depart. Point: Eagle, CO				Condition of Light: Day		
Destination: Leadville, CO				Weather Info Src: Weather Observation Facility		
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip				Basic Weather: Visual Conditions		
				Lowest Ceiling: None		
				Visibility: 10.00 SM		
				Wind Dir/Speed: 340 / 010 Kts		
				Temperature (°C): 9		
				Precip/Obscuration: None / None		
Pilot-in-Command	Age: 43			Flight Time (Hours)		
Certificate(s)/Rating(s)				Total All Aircraft: 2453		
Commercial; Single-engine Land; Helicopter				Last 90 Days: 104		
Instrument Ratings				Total Make/Model: 624		
Helicopter				Total Instrument Time: 72		

The pilot, who was on a power line patrol in mountainous terrain, flew the helicopter 100 feet to the right of the power line and into a 10 to 18 knot headwind. Airspeed was between 70 and 80 knots, altitude was 400 feet above the ground, and power was between 70 to 80 percent torque. As he turned to continue following the power line, a "strong downdraft pushed the helicopter" into the ground despite his efforts to regain control. The helicopter struck snow-covered terrain and rolled over.

Brief of Accident (Continued)

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Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER  
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - DOWNDRAFT

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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - ROUGH/UNEVEN

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

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The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.  
the pilot's inadvertent flight into adverse weather, which resulted in a collision with terrain. A contributing factor was the downdraft.